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# ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT, OF THE COMMONS

Assembled in PARLIAMENT in the name of themselves, and of all the *Commons* of ENGLAND,

Against

## Matthew Wren

Doctor in Divinitie, late Bishop of *Norwich*, and now Bishop of *Ely*, for severall crimes, and misdemeanors committed by him, when he was Bishop of *Norwich*.

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425 **ARTICLES** of Impeachment of the Commons assembled in Parliament in the name of themselves, and of all the Commons of England, against Matthew Wren, Doctor in Divinitie, late Bishop of Norwich, and now Bishop of Ely, for several crimes, 15 pp., sm. 4to, 1641 **7/6**

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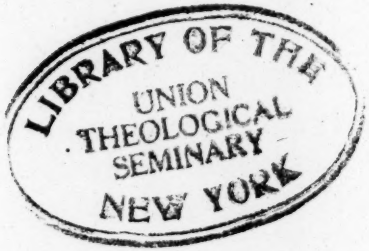

# Articles of impeachment against *Matthew Wren* Doctor in Divinitie, late Bishop of *Norwich*, and now Bishop of *Ely*.

THat the said *Matthew Wren*, being Popishly and superstitiously affected, did at his first coming to be Bishop of *Norwich*, which was in the yeer 1635. endeavour by sundry wayes, and means, to suppresse the powerfull and painfull Preaching of the Word of God; did introduce divers orders, and Injunctions, tending to superstition and Idolatry; did disturb, and disquiet the orderly, and settled estate of the Ministers, and people, and Churches of that Dioceſſe, to the great prejudice of His Majesty, the great grief and disquiet, and hazard of the estates, consciences, and lives of many of His Majesties Loyall Subjects there, to the manifest bringing in, and increasing of prophanesse, ignorance, and disobedience in the Common people, (as by the particulars ensuing may appear.)

I.

Whereas many Chancels of Churches, during all the time of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James*, and of his Majesty that now is, had laid and been continued

even, and flat, without any ſteps aſcending towards the Eaſt-end of the ſame, and are by the Rubrick in the Book of Common-prayer, ordered to continue as they were, and ſo ought to have continued. He of his own minde and will, without any lawfull warrant or authority, in the yeer 1636. being then Biſhop of *Norwich*, ordered and enjoyned, that the ſame ſhould be raiſed towards the Eaſt-end, ſome two, ſome three, ſome foure ſteps, that ſo the Communion Table there placed Altarwiſe, might be the better ſeen of the people.

II.

He in the ſame yeer 1636. ordered, That the Communion Table which is appointed by the ſaid Rubrick, at the time of the celebration of the holy Communion, to be placed in the Body of the Church or Chancell, where Divine Prayers are uſually read, and where the people might beſt hear, ſhould be ſet up cloſe under the Wall at the Eaſt-end of the Chancell Altarwiſe, and not to be removed from thence; whereby the Miniſter, who is by the Law to officiate at the Northſide of the Table, muſt either ſtand and officiate at the North-end of the Table ſo ſtanding Altarwiſe, or elſe after the Popiſh and Idolatrous manner, ſtand and officiate at the Weſtſide of the Table with his back towards the people.

III.

He in the ſame yeer 1636. enjoyned that there ſhould be a Rayl ſet on the top of the new raiſed ſteps before the Communion Table ſo ſet Altarwiſe as aforeſaid, which Rayl ſhould reach from the Southſide of the Chancell to the North within, which the Miniſter onely ſhould enter, as a place too holy for the people; and ſome of the people were puniſhed for ſtepping into it, as namely *Daniel Wbayman*, and others.

IV. The

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IV.

The more to advance blinde ſuperſtition, he in the ſame yeer 1636. ordered that all the Pewes in the Churches ſhould be ſo altered, that the people might kneel with their faces Eaſtward, towards the Communion Table ſo ſet Altarwiſe as aforeſaid; And that there ſhould be no ſeats in the Chancell above, or on either ſide even up with the ſaid Table.

V.

He in the ſame yeer 1636. enjoyned that every Miniſter after he had finiſhed the reading of ſome part of the Morning-Prayer, at the Desk, ſhould go out from the ſame to the holy Table ſet Altarwiſe, as to a more holy place and there, when no Communion was to be adminiſtred, read at the ſaid Table a part of the Communion Service, now commonly called the ſecond Service, whereby the conſciences both of the Miniſter, and people, have been not onely very much offended, and grieved, but alſo the Service it ſelf was made very unprofitable to the people, who could not hear what was ſaid, or prayed in that place.

VI.

That both he in his own perſon, his Chaplains, and others of the Clergy, as namely, Maſter *John Novell*, Maſter *William Gueſt*, Maſter *John Dunckon*, and others following his example, did ever after the Table was ſo ſet Altarwiſe, uſe and perform ſuch, ſo many, and ſo frequent bowing, and adorations before, and towards the ſaid Table as have been dangerous examples to draw others to the like ſuperſtitious geſtures, and have given great ſcandall, and offence to the ſound, ſincere, and well affected Chriſtians.

## VII.

He in the ſaid yeer 1636. enioyned all the people to come up to the Rayl to receive the holy Communion, and there kneel, and do reverence before the holy Table placed Altarwiſe; And gave directions to the Miniſters, not to adminiſter the Communion to ſuch people as ſhould not ſo come up, and do ſuch reverence as aforeſaid, And that the Miniſter ſhould within the Rayl deliver the Bread to ſuch people onely as ſhould ſo come up and kneel before the ſaid Table as aforeſaid. This was to the offence of the conſciences of many good people, who for fear of Idolatry and ſuperſtition, durſt not come to kneel at the ſaid Rayl before the Table ſo placed Altarwiſe; and many people not coming up thither, though preſenting themſelves upon their knees in the Chancell, have not had the Communion delivered unto them, and afterward for not receiving have been excommunicated, as namely. *John Shyming, Samuel Dimcken, Peter Fiſher, Thomas Newton, Edward Bedwell, Edmund Day, John Frowar,* and many others.

## VIII.

He did in the ſaid yeer 1636. enjoyn and command that there ſhould be no Sermons on the Lords dayes in the afternoon, or on the week dayes at all, without his Licence. And alſo enjoyned that there ſhould be no Catechiſing, but onely ſuch queſtions, and anſwers, as are contained in the Book of the Common prayer. Not allowing the Miniſters to expound or open the points of the ſame to the people. He and his under officers affirming in publike places, that ſuch an expoſition might be as ill as a Sermon. And the more to hearten, and confirm the people in prophaning the Lords day, He enjoyned the Miniſters to read publikely in their Churches, a Book publiſhed touching ſports on the

Lords

Lords Day. For not reading whereof, ſome Miniſters were by the command and directions of the ſaid Biſhop ſuſpended, *viz.* Maker *William Leigh*, Mr *Richard Proud*, Mr *Jonathan Burr*, Mr *Matthew Brownrigg*, Mr *Mott*, and divers others, ſome deprived, Maſter *Powell*, Mr *Richard Raymond*, Mr *Jeremy Borrowes*, and ſome otherwiſe troubled. By all which, knowledge was ſuppreſſed, and ignorance and prophanneſſe introduced in that Dioceſſe.

IX.

There having been formerly two kinds of ringing of Bels, and calling people to the Church in that Dioceſſe (*viz.*) one kinde, when there were onely Prayers to be read, and another kinde, when there were both Prayers to be read, and a Sermon preached, whereby the people did apply themſelves to the ſervice of God in thoſe places, where both Prayers, and Preaching was to be; He to hinder the people in their good deſires of ſerving of God, and edifying their ſoules, did in the ſame yeer 1636. command, and enjoyn that there ſhould be no difference in ringing of Bels to Church when there was a Sermon, and when there was none.

X.

Whereas many godly Miniſters for the preventing of the great ſinne in the people of unworthy receiving the holy Communion of the Lords Supper, did uſe to preach two or three dayes before every Communion, a preparation Sermon to prepare, and inſtruct the people in the right and worthy receiving of the Communion, He the ſaid Biſhop did in the ſaid yeer 1636. forbid Miniſters to preach any ſuch preparation Sermon in that Dioceſſe, as namely, Maſter *Devereux*, Maſter *Swayn*, and other Miniſters.

XI. Whereas

XI.

Whereas all Gods Ordinances are ſanctified, and made fruitfull by the bleſſing of God upon them by Prayer. He endeavouring to ſuppreſſe the power, and benefit of Prayer in the yeer 1636. enjoyned that no Miniſter ſhould uſe any prayer before his Sermon, but move the people to pray onely in the words of the fifty fifth Canon made *Anno Dom.* 1603. which Canon was not warranted by the Law. And that no prayer ſhould be uſed before or after the Sermon. And he in his own perſon having been at the Sermon in the Town of *Ipſwich* when the Preacher did uſe or make any other prayer, did ſit upon his ſeat without uſing, or giving any reverence of kneeling, or otherwiſe, thereby to diſcountenance ſuch prayer. And he in the ſaid yeer 1636. enjoyned that no prayer ſhould be made in the Pulpit for the ſick, and that ſuch as were prayed for in the reading Desk, ſhould be prayed for onely in the two Collects preſcribed for the viſitation of the ſick in private houſes.

XII.

He the more to alienate the peoples heart from hearing of Sermons in the ſaid yeer 1636. commanded, and enioyned all Miniſters to preach conſtantly in their hood, and Surplice, a thing not uſed before in that Dioceſſe, and much offenſive to the people as a ſcandalous innovation. And the Pariſhioners of *Knattſhall* wanting a Surplice, he did by his Officers in the yeer 1637. enioyn the Churchwardens there, that no prayers ſhould be read in that Church till they had got a Surplice, which they not getting for the ſpace of two Lords dayes after, had no prayers during that time there.

13. That during the time of his being Bishop of Norwich, which was about two yeares, and foure moneths, There were for not reading the second service, at the Communion Table set Altarwise, for not reading the booke of sports, for using conceived prayers before and after Sermons, And for not observing some other illegall innovations by him, and his under-officers, by and upon his directions, and Injunctions, sundry Godly painfull preaching ministers, that is to say, Master William *Powell*, Master *John Carter*, Master *Robert Peck*, Master *William Bridge*, Master *William Greene*, Master *Mott*, Master *Richard Raymond*, Master *Thomas Scot*, Master *Greenehill*, Master *Nicholas Beard*, Master *Hudson*, *Robert Kent*, *Jeremy Burrow*, Master *Thomas Allen*, and others to the number fifty, were excommunicated, suspended, or deprived and otherwise censured, and silenced, to the undoing of many of them, their wives, and children, and they could not be absolved without giving promise to conforme to his directions *editis & edendis*, by meanes whereof some ministers were enforced to depart this Realme into Holland, and other parts beyond Sea, viz. the said Mr. *William Bridge*, Mr. *Ieremy Borrowes*, Mr. *Thomas Allen*, Mr. *John Ward*, and others of Norwich, to remove into other more peaceable dioceses, as namely Mr. *Edmund Calamy*, Mr. *Broome*, Mr. *Beard* and others, and some of them so prosecuted, as hath beene suspected to bee the Cause of their deathes, as namely Mr. *Thomas Scot* and others; the terror of which proceedings hath caused other ministers to leave their Cures, and goe away, *viz.* Mr. *William Kirington*, Mr. *Thomas Warren*, Master *John Allen* and others; and if a stranger preached at the Cure of such person suspended, the Church-wardens permitting such person so to preach, were enjoyned pennance, and otherwise troubled, as namely the Church-wardens of Snailwell, and the stranger for preaching, was also therefore molested, *viz.* Mr.



*Ash*,

*Ash*, Mr. *Eades*, Master *Manning*, and other Ministers.

14. That during the time he was Bishop of the said See of Norwich, hee did unlawfully compell the inhabitants of the severall parishes, within that Dioces, to raise the flowers of the Chancells, of their respective Churches, to raile in their Communion Tables, to remove the Pewes and Seats, and to make other alterations in the respective Churches; in the doing whereof the said inhabitants, were put to great excessive, and unnecessary charges and expences, amounting in the whole, to the summe of five thousand pounds, and upwards, which said charges and expences, hee did by unlawfull meanes and courses, enforce the said inhabitants to undergoe; And such of the said inhabitants, as did not obey the same, hee did vex, trouble and molest by presentments, Citation, excommunications, tedious, and frequent Journeyes, and by attendances at the Courts of his Chancellor, and other his officialls, *viz.* the Church-wardens of Lin, Ipswich, S. *Edmunds Bury*, and others.

15. That for not comming up to the raile, to receive the holy communion, kneeling there before the table Altarwise, for not standing up at the Gospell, and for not observing and performing of his unlawfull innovations, and Injunctions, many other of his Majesties subjects *viz.* *Peter Fisher*, *Samuel Duncon*, *Iames Percivall*, *Iohn Armiger*, *Thomas King* and others, have beene by him, his Chancellors, Visitors Commissaryes, and Officialls by his command and injunctions, much molested, disquieted, and vexed in their estates and consciences by Citations to the Courts, long attendance there, dismission, Fees, Excommunications, Penancies, and other Censures.

16. That by reason of the rigorous prosecutions, and dealings

dealings in the laſt precedent *Articles* mentioned, and by reaſon of the continuall ſuperſtitious bowing to, and afore the table ſet Altarwiſe, the ſuſpending, ſilencing, driving away of the painfull preaching Miniſters, the ſuppreſſing, and forbidding of Sermons, and prayer; the putting downe of Lectures, the ſuppreſſing meanes of knowledg, and ſalvation, and introducing ignorance, ſuperſtition, & prophaneneſſe, many of his Majeſties ſubjects, to the number of three thouſand, many of which uſed trades of ſpinning, weaving, knitting, and making of Cloth, and Stuffe, Stockings, and other manufactures of Woolls, that is to ſay, *Daniell Sunning*, *Michaell Metcalfe*, *Iohn Berant*, *Nicholas Metcalfe*, *Iohn Derant*, *Busby*, widdow *Mapes*, *Richard Cock*, *Iohn Dicks*, *Francis Lawes*, *Iohn Senty* and many others, ſome of them ſetting an hundred poore people on worke, have removed themſelves, their families, and eſtates into Holland, and other parts beyond the Seas, and there ſet up and taught the Natives there, the ſaid manufactures, to the great hinderance of trade in this kingdome, and to the impoveriſhing, and bringing to extreame want, very many who were by thoſe parties formerly ſet on worke, to the great prejudice of his Majeſtie and his people.

17. That hee the ſaid Biſhop, finding the people to diſtaſte his innovations hath often in publike, and private ſpeeches declared in the ſaid yeare, 1636. That what hee did in the ſame, was by his Majeſties command, whereby he contrary to the duty of his place, which he held under his Majeſtie, being Deane of his Majeſties Royall Chappell, and contrary to the duty of a good and loyall ſubject, endeavoured to free himſelfe of blame, and to raiſe an ill opinion of his Royall Majeſtie, in the hearts of his loving ſubjects.

18. That he the ſaid *Matthew Wren*, being Biſhop

of Norwich in the said yeare, 1636. in the Tower Church in Ipswich, and other places, did in his owne person use superstitious and idolatrous actions, and gestures, in the administration of the Lords supper, consecrating the bread, and wine, standing at the West side of the Table with his face to the East, and his back towards the people elevating the Bread, and Wine, so high as to bee seene over his shoulders bowing low, either to or before them, when he after the elevation, and consecration, had set them downe on the Table.

19. That he the more to manifest his Popish affection in the said yeare 1636, caused a Crucifix, that is to say, the figure of Christ upon the Crosse to be engraven upon his Episcopall Seale besides the Armes of the See.

20. That he hath chosen & imployed such men to be his Commissioners, Rurall Deanes, and to be his household Chaplaines, whom he knew to be, and stand affected to his innovated courses, and to popish superstition, and to be erroneous, and unsound in judgement and practise, as namely M. *John Nowel*, M. *Edmond Mapletoft*, M. *John Dunkin*, M. *Bouck*, M. *Dunn*, and others.

21. That he hath very much oppressed divers Patrons of Churches by admitting without any colour of title his owne Chaplaines and others whom he affected into Livings, which became void within his Dioces, unjustly enforcing the true and right Patrons to long and chargeable suits to evict such Incumbents, and to recover their owne right, some of which he did against his Priestly word given to the said Patrons or their friends in *verbo Sacerdotis* not to do the same. This he did in the case of one M. *Rivet*.

22. That he and others in the yeare 1635, sould, or granted

granted away the profits of his Primary Visitation for five hundred pounds over and above the charges of the Visitation, and for the better benefit of the Farmer, set forth a book in the yeare 1636 intituled Articles to be inquired of within the dioces of Norwich, in the first Visitation of *Matthew* Lord Bishop of Norwich, consisting of 139 Articles, and wherein are contained the number of eight hundred ninety seven questions, according to all which, the Churchwardens were inforced to present upon paine of perjury. And some Churchwardens, that is to say, *Robert Langley*, *Charles Newton*, *Richard Hart*, *William Bull*, and *Zephany Ford*, and others not making presentments accordingly, were cited, molested, and troubled, and injoyned pennance; notwithstanding many of the said Articles were ridiculous and impossible.

23. That the Churchwardens, and other men sworne at the Visitation, were inforced to have their presentments written by Clarks specially appointed by such as bought the said Visitation, to whom they paid excessive summes of money for the same, some two and twenty shillings, as namely, *Richard Hurrell*, *John Pinchard*, and others, some more, some lesse, for writing one presentment, to the grievous oppression of his Majesties poore subjects in that dioces.

24. Whereas by the Lawes of this Realme no tythes ought to be paid out of the rents of houses, nor is there any custome or usage in the City of Norwich for such payment, yet the said Bishop indeavoured to draw the Citizens, and other inhabitants within the said City against their wils and consents to pay two shillings in the pound in liew of the tithes of houses within the severall Parishes of the said City, unto the Ministers there, of the said respective parishes. And the better to effect this his

unjust

unjuſt reſolution, he did by falſe and undue ſuggeſtions in the fourteenth yeere of his Majeſties reigne that now is, procure his Majeſtie to declare under his Highneſſe great Seale of England his royall pleaſure, That if any perſon, within the ſaid City ſhall refuſe to pay according to the ſaid rate of two ſhillings the pound unto the Miniſter of any Pariſh within the ſaid City; That the ſame be heard in the Court of Chancery, or in the Conſiſtory of the Biſhop of Norwich. And that in ſuch caſe no prohibition againſt the ſaid Biſhop of Norwich, their Chancellors, or Commiſſaries in the ſaid Courts of Conſiſtory be granted. And if any ſuch writ be at any time obtained, the Judges ſo granting the ſame, upon ſight of his Highneſſe ſaid Order ſhall forthwith grant a conſultation to the Miniſter deſiring the ſame with his reaſonable coſts and charges for the ſame, which ſaid order and decree under the great Seale of England tended to the violation of the oathes of the Judges, and was deviſed, contrived, and made by the ſaid Biſhop. And afterwards by his evill counſels and falſe ſurmiſes he did obtaine his Majeſties royall conſent thereunto, & by colour of the order aforeſaid, and other the doings of the ſaid Biſhop, the Citizens and inhabitans of Norwich aforeſaid, *viz.* *Iohn Collar*, *Iudith Perkeford*, and others, have beene inforced to pay the ſaid two ſhillings in the pound in liew of tythes, or elſe by ſuits and other undue meanes beene much moleſted, and put to great charges and expences, contrary to the law, and juſtice.

25. That he aſſumed to himſelfe an arbitrary power to compell the reſpective pariſhioners in the ſaid dioces to pay great and exceſsive wages to pariſh Clarks, *viz.* the pariſhioners of Yarmouth, Congham, Toſtock, and others, commanding his officers, that if any pariſhioner did refuſe to pay ſuch wages, they ſhould certifie him their names, and he would ſet them into the High Commiſſion

miſsion Court for example of the reſt. And that one or two out of Ipſwich might be taken for that purpoſe.

And the ſaid Commons by proteſtation ſaving to themſelves the liberties of exhibiting at any time hereafter any other accuſation or impeachment againſt the ſaid *Matthew Wren* late Biſhop of Norwich, and now Biſhop of Ely, and alſo of replying to the anſwer that he the ſaid *Matthew Wren* ſhall make unto the ſaid Articles, or any of them, or of offering proofe of the premiſſes or any other impeachments or accuſations that ſhall be exhibited by them as the caſe ſhal (according to the courſe of Parl aments) require, do pray that he the ſaid *Matth. Wren* may be called to anſwer the ſaid ſeverall crimes, and miſdemeanours, and receive ſuch condigne puniſhment as the ſame ſhall deſerve, and that ſuch further proceedings may be upon every of them had, and uſed againſt him, as is agreeable to law and juſtice.

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FINIS.

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